

Virginia Department of Veterans Services

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Kane Directs State Agencies to Look for Opportunities to Improve Services to Veterans

RICHMOND—Executive Order 19, which Governor Timothy M. Kane signed at the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Richmond on June 16, directs the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) to prepare a comprehensive report on the status of Virginia's programs and services to the state's veterans. The Order directs DVS and other state agencies to find ways to offer new, expanded or customized services that will meet the educational, health care and social service needs of Virginia's veterans. The order gives special attention to disabled veterans, and asks all state agency heads to renew their commitment to giving veterans preference when hiring.

"In his first five months in office, Governor Kane has shown a strong commitment to the welfare of Virginia's veterans. Executive Order 19 further demonstrates his support of our veterans and their families," said Vince Burgess, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services.

DVS, the Board of Veterans Services and the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations will submit legislative proposals for the 2007 General Assembly session to the Governor by September 30, as directed by the order. An interim report on DVS' findings about the status of veterans services in Virginia is due to the Governor by October 15, 2006 and a final report is due by April 30, 2007.

Approximately 750,000 veterans live in Virginia. In 2004, veterans accounted for nearly \$6 billion in direct federal spending in Virginia. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs expended \$1.8 billion on compensation and pension benefits, health care, cemetery services, and construction while the U.S. Department of Defense paid \$4 billion in retirement pay to Virginia's veterans.

"It's thanks to our veterans that we are able to enjoy freedom everyday," added Burgess. "In return, we must ensure that they receive the medical, educational, and support services that they need and that they have access to meaningful employment."

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